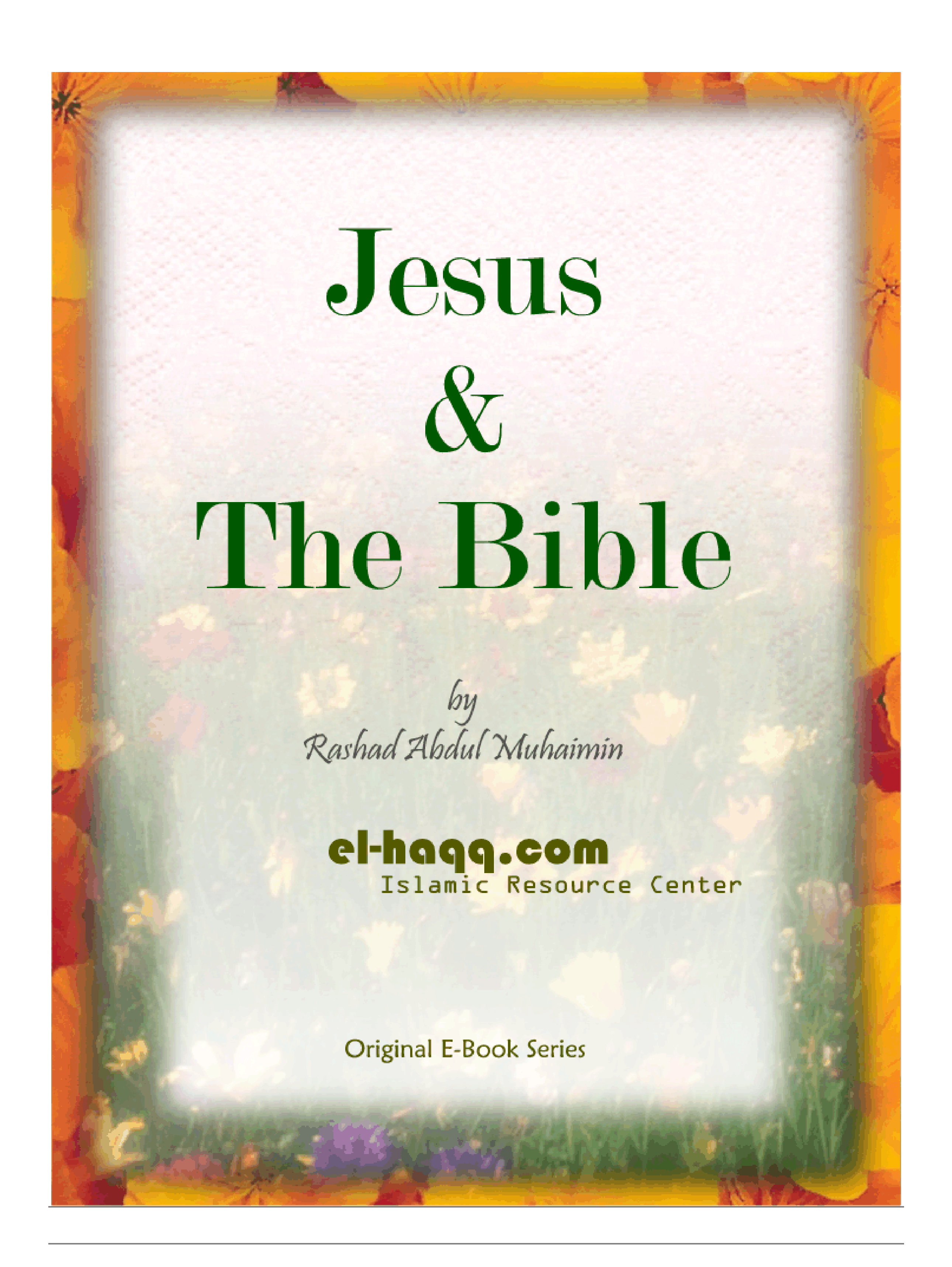


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PREFACE

Indeed, All Praise belongs to Allah. We praise Allah, we seek his assistance and we beg his forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own selves and from the evil of our deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, no one can mislead and whomsoever Allah allows to go astray, none can guide. I bare witness and give open testimony that there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah, who has no associates and I bare witness that Muhammad is his servant and his messenger. To proceed:

It is my intention to present a small, concise examination of some key elements from the core beliefs of Christianity from within the Christian texts themselves as well as shed some light on the Islamic perspective of the purpose and message of Jesus (upon him be peace). The goal is to engage the reader in logical analysis of the fundamental creed of Christianity as it is taught and practiced by contrasting these beliefs against the alleged words of Jesus himself as recorded in the four gospels. For the potential Christian reader, it is important to remember that in order to remain open to different ideas; one must approach this topic from an intellectual standpoint as opposed to an emotional one. If one has an emotional commitment to something that cannot be substantiated with reason, especially after clear proof has been given, then one has succumb to what is known as 'blind faith'. It is the emotional equivalent of being passionately in love with someone who causes one nothing but harm and grief. It is only when a belief system has been held up to scrutiny and has been authenticated that it becomes worthy of an emotional commitment. If it is determined that the foundation of that system stands up to reason and is consistent in all of its sources, then we are obligated to acknowledge it as truth and adhere to it completely. Any creed that does not live up to this standard does not deserve our devotion.

This meager effort is by no means a thorough examination but it is a simple discussion of some very basic concepts of Christianity and how they diverge from the simple message of Jesus. Many works have been authored by many great scholars who have gone into great detail explaining the origins of Christian belief, the Bible, etc. This insha'Allah, (God willing) will serve as an introduction into these issues and I encourage the reader to investigate further. I must point out that from the out-set, it may seem difficult for the non-Muslim reader to take in these concepts from a Muslim perspective (as would a Muslim be hesitant to accept an analysis of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from the Christian perspective). However, one must note that the Islamic position confirms Jesus' mission from God and seeks to exonerate him from the misconceptions that have arisen concerning him. The 1.5 billion Muslims on the planet Earth unquestionably believe in Jesus and acknowledge him as the Messiah and it would take one out of the fold of Islam to not believe in him, his mission, his birth, his miracles and his return. An analysis of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from the Christian's perspective is all together different in that the Christian does not hesitate to revile and discredit his mission as well as hurl very personal and derogatory accusations at his person. To confirm the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is to reject the church formulated doctrines of Christianity. If one is honest in his/her analysis of statements attributed to Jesus in the Bible, it becomes clear that at face value, the message of Jesus was the same as all of the other Messengers of God, including

Muhammad (PBUH) and that is to worship God, The Creator, alone without any rivals and to submit to his will. This in and of itself confirms the mission of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) because one who submits to God, in Arabic, is called *Muslim.* May Allah guide us all to his truth, make us firm upon it and forgive us for our mistakes. Ameen.

Rashad Abdul Muhaimin
Director, El-Haqq Islamic Resource Center
Rabi' Al-Awwal 2, 1424 / May 3, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

The task of writing about Jesus and the Bible from a logical perspective is, as I have come to find out, an incredible undertaking. There is so much information that has to be processed that it seems impossible to include every piece of historical and scriptural information in the study. Therefore, I will narrow down the scope of this endeavor by simply focusing on a few key issues using the Bible as my main source of reference. This will consist of the four canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) with a few cross-references to select verses in the Old Testament. The only other major source of information concerning the person and message of Jesus Christ is The Qur'an. There are those who would say that only a Muslim would use the Qur'an as a source of information about Jesus. The same argument however, can be used concerning Christians and the Bible. Indeed, this is the reason such a study should be done. For it is the inconsistency of The Bible itself that renders its information suspect and therefore it is a poor source of reference to use against the Muslim and The Qur'an. The Qur'an, the book of Islam, describes in a much more consistent manner the life and message of Jesus. One element that adds to the consistency of the information about Jesus in The Qur'an is that it is told in one voice. That is to say, there are no 'alternative perspectives' included in the Qur'an. The New Testament contains the four canonical Gospels, which all supposedly tell much of the same story. When we read the Gospels however, we find that not only do these four different versions come to us from different sources, but they stand in complete contradiction to one another in some key areas. In addition to this, there are even contradictions *within* the individual Gospels themselves. The Qur'an is free of those elements. Hence, we must include The Qur'an as reference if we are to remain logical in our approach. The key is logic. In an American court of law, evidence is presented to make a case. Witnesses are called to corroborate the evidence. However, if the witness' testimony is proven inconsistent under cross-examination, the case has been severely weakened. If the foundation of the 'case' of present day Christianity is the Bible and the Bible is shown to be inconsistent in it's 'testimony' , then those who preach the Bible and read the Bible must seriously reconsider their source of information concerning their faith. This is not an attack on Christianity or those who call themselves Christians. Nor is it an attack on scripture from God. It is a study of logic and reason concerning Jesus and his mission. Many of the sayings we find in the Bible attributed to Jesus are consistent with that found in The Qur'an. In fact, it is the sayings and sermons attributed to Jesus in the Bible that form the biggest argument ***against*** the way Christianity is practiced today. We intend to examine those briefly, God willing. The reason it is necessary to point out some inconsistencies in the Bible itself is to prove that; 1.) The present day versions of the Bible are flawed and do not warrant the notion of infallibility; 2.) It becomes necessary to look for other sources of information and be open to them; 3.) Prove that if man can add and delete or revise divine scripture, it will naturally lose some of its authenticity.

There are actually some other sources of information concerning Jesus that are probably unknown to the average Bible reader such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the large amount of collected and authenticated Hadeeth (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H) available for anyone to read. For the purpose of this study, we will mostly deal with the Bible and Qur'an. Lastly, the entire objective is to properly understand and appreciate Jesus in the manner which is most appropriate. We want to use the Bible to prove that Jesus is not and did not claim to be Divine. Nor did Jesus claim to be the literal son of God. Jesus never spoke of the Trinity. We intend to use the Bible to prove this. The book of Christianity will prove this. The problem lies with the fact that most Christians follow those that came after Jesus and in the name of Jesus rather than actually following the teaching and guidance of Jesus. The self-appointed Apostle Paul has influenced the teachings of Christianity more than Jesus himself. There are more books in the entire Bible written by Paul than anyone else. This includes Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, AND Jesus. All of these were messengers from God, yet Paul has more writings in the Bible than the Prophets! Paul was neither a prophet nor a messenger from God. All the prophets brought essentially the same message. Paul's writings were radically different from the messages the Prophets brought. This, however, is a different study unto itself. It is quite peculiar that Jesus is the only major figure in the Bible who does not have one book attributed to him. There is no 'Gospel of Jesus' or 'Book of Jesus'. There are only books written by someone other than Jesus attempting to convey something of what Jesus spoke.

JESUS – SON OF WHOM?

The first major hurdle we will address is the parentage or alleged parentage of Jesus. The fundamental belief in present day Christianity is that Jesus is the literal begotten son of God and is second in the Divine Trinity of God's being. If this is somehow disturbed, then as this is the foundation of the Christian belief, Christianity itself collapses. If the foundation is solid and the 'testimony' is consistent, the Christian religion has in fact proven its case beyond a reasonable doubt. Before I begin quoting from the Bible I would like to point out that these verses from the Bible are written in English. The Gospels themselves were first written down in Greek and not in Jesus' tongue of Aramaic. This is generally known amongst Bible scholars. There are no original Aramaic or Hebrew texts that exist to cross-reference the Greek and English translations with. As anyone who studies languages will tell you, a language can either lose or gain many meanings in a translation. This is critical when it comes to scripture. The word 'son' may have a totally different connotative meaning when translated from Aramaic to Greek to English. It is quite difficult to convey the meanings of Eastern languages to English without losing something or gaining something that is not intended. The same goes for the word 'lord'.

The verse most quoted amongst Christians to support the notion of Jesus being the literal divine son of God is of course John 3:16 in which it is written…

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) KJV.

Now this is a straight forward verse that is clear in its meaning and what in what it is trying to convey. The first thing that should be noted, however, is that this verse is not attributed to Jesus nor is it a quote from Jesus. This is a verse written by someone else. The verse is attributed to a man named John. John was the last of the Gospels to be written and no one is sure of exactly which John this is supposed to be. The Gospel of John was written around 100 C.E. at Ephesus. That is approximately seventy years after the time of Jesus. As Adolf Harnack points out in his book, What is Christianity?:

"the fourth Gospel does not emanate or profess to emanate from the apostle John, who cannot be taken as an historical authority…the author of the fourth Gospel acted with sovereign freedom, trans-posed events and put them in a strange light. "

The Gospel of John is considered to be the most beautifully written of the Gospels. According to Acts 4:13, however, Peter and John were both ignorant and unlearned men. The Gospel of John is written as a drama of sorts, unfolding layers of measured resolution and emotion. Not something unlearned men are known to produce. 'He was divinely inspired by God…' can be heard as an argument. 'Look at your Qur'an and its masterly prose. Muslims claim Muhammad was unlearned yet look at the Qur'an…'. The problem with that argument is that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is a fully realized and documented historical figure. History recognizes Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as a man who definitely lived, taught, and revolutionized his society. His sayings have been documented to the letter. The Qur'an was memorized by not only by the Prophet himself but also by his followers. Even the most secular historians must admit this. The personality and person of John, however, cannot be substantiated with historical documented evidence. Bible historians debate over whether or not John the Apostle was the same John who is credited with writing this Gospel. According to Blacks Bible Dictionary, John was beheaded before 70 C.E., and a connection to the first manuscript of 'the Gospel of John' at Ephesus around 100 C.E. would be difficult to establish. So let us revisit the passage.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) KJV.

The real test of the verse is in its consistency with the rest of the Bible whom the Christians claim to accept as a whole. As you can see, it reads "…only begotten son…" but when we look at Psalms 2:7 David says, *"…the Lord said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee."* This is a serious discrepancy for the sincere Bible reader. Who is telling the truth, David or the mystery John? Can we rely on the Psalms for the truth or 'The Gospel of John'? Is the Gospel the literal and the Psalms the figurative or vice versa? Jesus is given many 'fathers' in the N.T. The first line in the New Testament reads, *" The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1).* Are we to accept the literal meaning of this or the figurative? And if we are to assume that the verse only means that he was a spiritual son of David, then why can't we assume the same thing is meant when Jesus refers to God the "Father"? For according to the N.T. statements attributed to Jesus he says, *"…Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48).* As well as, *"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father…"(Matt 6:9).* And to confirm the spiritual connection of the righteous, *"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matt 12:50).* This verse uses the word 'Father'

but Mark 3:35 reads, *" For whosoever does the will of* ***<u>God</u>****, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."* How many times in the N.T. is the word 'Father' used to describe God? If 'Father' has substituted the word 'God' in this verse, how many other verses have been tweaked? That this is not a literal relationship is plain to see and comprehend. Another verse is describing David as being Jesus' father, *"…And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32).* Now if God was Jesus' literal physical father, wouldn't it have made sense to distinguish the difference in this verse which presents Jesus along with David as his father? Let's assume that Jesus is understood to be God's son in this verse and rewrite the verse stating that idea. It would read, *"…And his father, the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David…"*. This makes absolutely no sense at all and the authors knew this. The author of this verse knew that in order for it to make any sense, only one could be connected to Jesus as a 'Father'. And since the legitimacy of Jesus' mission must come through David, according to the Bible, it was more prudent to connect Jesus as an heir to David than to infuse the verse with 'son of God' dogma. The curious thing is that in Matthew and Luke, the genealogy of Jesus is traced through Joseph as if Joseph had some blood relation to Jesus. Jesus is supposed to have been divinely conceived within Mary without the husbandly help of Joseph. How then can Jesus' genealogy be logically traced back to David through Joseph? In Luke 2:41 it reads, *"Now <u>his parents</u> went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover."* His parents being Mary and Joseph? The only person that anyone can be sure of about Jesus' parentage is Mary yet no where is Jesus explicitly called son of Mary in the Bible. The Qur'an is consistent and clear on this matter. Jesus is referred to as Al-Maseeh 'Isa ibn Maryam or The Messiah (Christ) Jesus, son of Mary.

إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ
ٱسْمُهُ ٱلْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَمِنَ
ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

(Remember) when the angels said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah gives you the glad tidings of a Word ["Be!" - and he was! i.e. 'Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary)] from Him, his name will be the Messiah 'Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to Allah." (3:45)

According to the Bible God had even more sons. The Book of Job 2:1 reads, *"Again there was a day when <u>sons of God</u> came to present themselves before the Lord…"*. This is yet another contradiction of the *"…only begotten son…"* notion of John 3:16. But wait, there is more. In Luke, after tracing the so-called genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam it reads, *"…Which was the son of Enos, Which was the son of Seth, Which was the son of Adam, <u>Which was the son of God</u>"(Luke 3:38).*

So will real the real father of Jesus and the real sons of God please stand up! This is confusing as well it should be for the average Bible reader. The problem lies in the interpretation of lost manuscripts that have been roughly translated or mistranslated through the ages. There is an allegorical message in these books that has been interpreted and taught as literal. There have also been concessions made by the Early Pauline Church to make the simple teachings of Jesus palatable to the pagans of Europe and western Asia. Throughout ancient forms of worship there have been religions of divine offspring of a great god. These areas of Syria, Greece, and Rome were practicing pagans who worshipped human beings whom they thought were god incarnates. The ancient rites of Mithraism, Attis, Adonis, Diana, Dionysus and many more all were practiced in the so called gentile lands that the Pauline church longed to bring into their fold. These pagan religions all contained elements of what now compose Christianity. That, however, is another topic.

TRINITY IN THE BIBLE

There is a quick and easy way to explain the concept of Trinity in the Bible…It's not in there. Well, actually, it depends on which Bible you read. If you read the old King James Version, you will of course read I John 5:7 where it says, *" For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and The Holy Ghost: And these three are one."* I would like to point out that virtually all Biblical scholars and historians have unanimously concluded that this verse is an insertion! If you think that this statement that I have just put forth is biased then I suggest you pick up any recent publication of the Bible such as the Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, The New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, The New English Bible, etc, etc. All of these versions have completely ***excluded*** the verse. Benjamin Wilson says in his Emphatic Diaglott,

"his text concerning the heavenly witness is not contained in any Greek manuscript which was written earlier than the fifteenth century. It is not cited by any of the ecclesiastical writers…"

Peake's Commentary on the Bible notes;

"The Famous interpolation after 'three witnesses' is not printed even in RSV, and rightly. It cites the heavenly testimony of the Father, the Logos, and the Holy Spirit, but is never used in the early Trinitarian controversies. No respectable Greek MS contains it. Appearing first in a late 4th –cent. Latin text, it entered the Vulgate and finally the NT of Erasmus."

The same verse quoted above from the original KJV of the Bible, reads this way in the NRSV.

"There are three that testify:"(I John 5:7)

That's it! That's all there is in I John chapter 5 verse 7 from the New Revised Standard Version. It goes on in verse 8 to say, *"…the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree."*

There is nothing about Father and Son. Even if some scholar were to interpret the spirit, water, blood as analogous to the 'Holy Trinity', the difference between one text saying *"…and these three are one"* and *"…and these three agree"* is too blatant a contradiction to ignore. There is a difference between being in agreement and being 'one', unless the word 'one' is being used figuratively to mean in agreement. If the message of Jesus is in alignment with what God has ordered, then, in an allegorical sense, he is 'one' with God. So which Bible are Christians meant to follow? Is one a 'Holy Bible' and the other a 'Holier Bible'? If these texts can be deleted and interpolated by men, how can this book be considered the "word of God"? Are Christian Bible readers supposed to read their Bibles faithfully until another revised addition is published then cast the old one aside like an out-dated software program? What about the faithful who still have old KJV bibles who haven't been notified that their text has been upgraded and some verses have been left out because it has been determined that the verses were in fact interpolations? What about the preachers who still teach from Bibles that are out-dated and contain verses that have been identified as false according to most Bible scholars?

The fact remains it is difficult to discuss the concept of Trinity and its Biblical references because there aren't any. The concept of Trinity was developed over the span of three and a half centuries after the time of Jesus. In the New Catholic Encyclopedia, it says,

"…when one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'One God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought…it was a product of 3 centuries of doctrinal development"

Trinities were worshipped in several places during the time of Jesus as well as in antiquity. The Egyptians worshipped trinities. So did the Babylonians and Zoroastrians. Hindu worship revolves around a trinity. Many societies based their worship around the concept of trinities. Once the 'One God' of Jesus was introduced to the pagan Romans and others in the area in the form of a 'trinity' through Christianity, it became easy for the heathen worshippers to move laterally to a form of worship that had the same elements but with different names. This is the environment that Paul was immersed in. Paul was in fact heavily influenced by Greco-Roman ideologies and philosophies of God incarnate in man, religious blood sacrifice and resurrection and triune Platonic theories of the 'first cause', the 'reason' or 'logos', and the 'spirit' of the universe. Many of the man-deities were the rulers of Greece, Rome, Egypt, etc. It is well known that the Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs were worshipped as gods and in some of the ancient myths, the 'man-god' Pharaoh had to be sacrificed for the greater good of the society. History records that Julius Caesar was deified by the Romans and the Greeks with the approval of the senate and this was commemorated with a temple and statue dedicated to his worship. Constantine was considered the human manifestation of the Roman sun-god, Sol-invictus. Many compromises were made early on in the church to accommodate these pagan beliefs. The Sabbath (in Arabic, *sab'ah* – seven) was changed from the seventh day to *Sun*-day, the holy day for the Roman sun god and

Christmas was set to be celebrated on December 25th, which happened to be not only the birthday of the Roman sun-god Sol-Invictus but also the very popular Persian Sun-god Mithra. According to A.D. Ajijola in his book, The Hijacking of Christianity, the Persian sun-deity Mithra was worshiped almost 600 yeas before it was introduced to Rome. Mithra was supposedly born of a virgin on December 25th and died in service to humanity. He was buried and he rose from the tomb to be heralded as a 'savior' for all humanity. He is depicted in ancient drawings as a 'lamb'. The concept of a 'resurrected' deity was also well ingrained in the beliefs of the people of the Mediterranean Region. In his monumental work, The Golden Bough, James George Frazer writes,

" Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead."

DID JESUS BRING A NEW LAW?

Many Christians faithfully believe that Jesus (upon him be peace) came and brought with him a different law than what the prophets of old had taught. They faithfully believe that God changed the rules in the middle of the game and even forced everyone to adjust their way of how they perceived him. The concept of God in the Old Testament is fairly straightforward and simple. There is One God. Nothing else should be worshipped. Christians believe that this teaching was outdated and God ordered this new, very confusing concept of Himself. God was now a mystery that could not be explained. God was one… but he was also three. He was God… but Jesus was also God. Then something called the Holy Spirit was thrown in …and IT was God! The very foundation of this doctrine is illogical and does not stand up to reason. In simple mathematics three does not equal one no matter how many times you try to reconcile it. What if for every *one* dollar I had, the bank would consider it as *three*. What if the banks counted *one dollar* for every *three dollars* you had. Those same logic bending, mathematically challenged Christians would become math whizzes overnight explaining to the banks that one=one and three=three! God creates this world based in logic for our own well being. Then, according to the Christians, he forces us to worship him in a way that our minds cannot even get around? According to this teaching, we are to navigate through life with a sound sense of logic and reason in the real world. But on *Sun*-day we step into this illogical place where three is one. 'God can do anything', is what may be said. Let us examine that statement. Don't stop reading this! Let me finish. God does not do what is inconsistent with being God. In other words, God is perfect and does not do that which diminishes His perfection. For example, can God manifest himself in the form of a gnat? You may say, 'Sure'. OK, that gnat is then flying around some man's dinner plate and is swatted and killed. Is this in the nature of God? He does not do things that are inconsistent with being the Creator, most High. Apply the same logic to God manifesting himself as a man. A man who hurts, cries, prays and in fact, can be killed.

According to Matthew, chapter 5, verses 17, 18, 19 Jesus explicitly states,"

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

In Matt 19:16, 17 it says,

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

And He said unto him, <u>Why callest thou me good</u>? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life<u>, keep the commandments</u>.

And in Mark 10:19,

Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not. Honor thy Father and Mother.

Not only do these verses state explicitly that Jesus came as a continuation of the law of Moses but in the latter verse Jesus plainly differentiates between himself and God when someone called him 'good'.

In Mark 12:29 Jesus says,"…*The first of all commandments is , Hear, O Israel, The Lord <u>our</u> God is one Lord…"*

The emphasis here is on having no other deity except the One God. Is this the focus of present day Christianity? Why is the word *'our'* used? If Jesus is God or 1/3 God, why would he say 'the Lord *our* God is One Lord'? Is he his own God? We are searching for truth dear reader and we must acknowledge this major inconsistency concerning the words attributed to Jesus and the teachings of Christianity if we are to be honest in our quest.

Concerning other aspects of the law of Moses, it states in Luke 2:21, 22,

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

If we honestly read the gospels, can we come to the conclusion that Jesus came to abolish the understanding of the One God as taught by Noah, Abraham, and Moses and replace this with a 'new' religion of three gods in one, god-incarnate in man, ritual blood sacrifice, and vicarious atonement? Where did Jesus speak about any of these things? These

ideologies could not have been further from the simple message of Jesus which was to sincerely adhere to the law of God in submission.

GOD OR PROPHET?

One key neglected aspect of the gospels is the overwhelming evidence that Jesus was understood to be exactly what he was and that was a Prophet of God sent to the lost sheep of the children of Israel. When searching for the true meanings of 'revelation' or 'scripture', it is absolutely necessary to approach and understand the text as it was understood during the time of its revelation. It is a must that we approach the person and mission of Jesus the way it was understood by those who knew him and were with him. If we do not do this, we become susceptible to misinterpretation due to someone's cultural and linguistic baggage. In other words, if we view the mission and person of Jesus through the eyes of someone who did not directly walk with Jesus or through our own interpretation, we unconsciously compromise the purity of the text. When Christians hear Muslims say that we believe in Jesus but as a Prophet of God not as part of a trinity, they are taken aback. However, let us examine what the very people who are reported to have met Jesus believed according to the book of Christianity. In Matthew, Chapter 13 verses 53-56, it relates the story of how the Jews in a synagogue in Jesus' homeland were astonished and offended at his preaching and began to question him. In Matthew 13:57 it says, *"…but Jesus said to them,' A Prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.'"*.

In Mark 6:4 it reads, *But Jesus said unto them, 'A prophet is not without honor but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.'*

Also in Matthew 11:40-41;

"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth the One who sent me. He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's reward…"

In Matthew 21:10-11;

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, The Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Matthew 21:46;

But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude because they took him for a Prophet.

Again, when asked about the commandments in Matthew 22:36-39;

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Then in the very next verse it reads, *"On these two commandments hang the law and all the prophets."*

In Luke 7:16 it reads, *" and there came a fear on all; And they glorified God saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us…"*

In our search for truth, we must use what is consistent in meaning and purpose. We have already shown that an argument against the idea that Jesus was in fact a Prophet flies in the face of consistency. The verses that may be used from the gospels to prove that Jesus was the 'son' of God or one of three in a trinity have already proven to be inconsistent with the rest of the Bible and with the gospels themselves.

THE ROLE OF PAUL

Any discussion about Christianity and its beliefs and practices cannot be complete without an examination of the influence of Paul. Christian Bible scholars unanimously admit that the formulation of what is now known as Christianity did not begin with Jesus but with Paul. Every Bible produced contains more writings from Paul than anyone. In fact, all of the books written by Paul in the Bible were written before any of the four gospels. This is a very important fact. Does the layman Christian reflect on the radical dfferences between the teachings of Jesus and the writings of Paul? The gospels were written at a time when Paul's ideas had already begun to take hold among the 'gentiles'. We have already touched upon the prevalent religious ideologies that formed Paul's interestingly diverse background. We know that he was a Roman citizen who was a Jew and a murderer of Jesus' followers from amongst the Jews. He claims to have 'seen' the light on a road to Damascus wherein he saw Jesus and was filled with the 'Holy Spirit' and was commanded to preach to the masses. However, when we examine closely his recounting of this very convenient story as written by someone called 'Luke' in Acts, we find that there is a mountain of inconsistency in these testimonies. In the first account of the incident that appears in Acts 9:7, it is says, *'And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.'*

Just a few pages later however, the testimony changes;

'And they that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.' (Acts23:9).

In these first two examples we see a major discrepancy. In one account the men with Paul heard the voice but did not see a man. In the second account, they saw 'light' but did not hear anything. In both examples, Jesus supposedly tells Paul to Arise and go into the city (Damascus) and there he shall receive instruction. (Acts 9:6; 23:10) Alas, just a few chapters later in his testimony to the King Agrippa, he says that Jesus actually gave him his mission and instructions in detail right there on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:16-18). Could any of this even hold up in a court of law? Are we to excuse these major inconsistencies from an acknowledged enemy of Jesus and friend of Rome? How can we not accept similar disparate witness testimony in judicial matters but in religious matters, we base our entire creed upon accounts that are shaky at best? We have already shown the vast difference between the gospel reports of Jesus painstakingly exhorting the people to stick to the letter of Moses' law

and Paul's renunciation of the law. In Galatians 3:13 he writes, *'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law'.* And, *'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law' (Romans 3:28).* This is the very opposite of what Jesus is reported to have said in the gospels;

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

And Matt 19:16, 17;

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

And He said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Paul even gives himself absolute authority to convert people to his way by any means, *'All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.'*(I Corinthians 6:12)

Jesus not only preached that the commandments of God be kept but he also kept them himself. One cannot even imagine Jesus uttering such words yet they flow easily from the pen of Paul without remorse. So who do the Christians actually follow, Jesus or Paul. Do Christians follow Jesus in the worship of the One God;

Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (Matthew 22:36-39) And Mark 12:29,

"…The first of all commandments is , Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord…"

Or do Christians follow Paul in the worship of Jesus as a resurrected man-deity who was born on December 25th and who was killed and resurrected as a blood sacrifice on the 3rd day during the spring re-birth season?

So what was Paul's objective? It has been suggested that from the outset he was an open enemy of the early Jewish sect of the followers of Jesus. Perhaps what is even more intriguing is the suggestion that he went from open opposition to the early followers of Jesus on behalf of the Roman Empire to what we have come to know today as 'covert ops'. To put it plainly, he may have been history's most famous 'secret' agent.

A.D Ajijola states,

"Startling though the suggestion may be, it does seem at least possible that Paul was some species of Roman agent. 'Eisenman in his book Maccabees, Zadokites, Christians, and Qumran' was led to this conclusion on reading the scrolls themselves, then found the references in the New Testament to support it "(The Hijacking of Christianity).

Ajijola goes on to say,

"St. Paul urged his disciples to obey Rome who was ordained by God. This was an acquiescence in the political status quo. Consequently, the Pauline Christian doctrine was fitted from the start to become the official religion of the Roman Empire."

Is this the person that the Christian derives their concept of the Creator of all that exists in the universe? Is Paul a reliable enough authority in monotheism for the Christian to take his religion from? If we take the Bible as a whole and examine the God that was described and worshiped by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and all of the Prophets including the clear description of God and that was worshipped and praised by Jesus in the gospels and contrast this with the concept of God beginning where Paul's writings monopolize the rest of the Bible, we must conclude that the part that does not align with the basis laid down by the previous Prophets must originate from somewhere else. When we also take into consideration the fact that the worship of sun-gods, man-gods, sacrificed and risen deities who were all born during the winter solstice of December 25th permeated the Roman Empire, parts of Asia, North Africa, and Northern Europe, we began to see the influence of those beliefs and practices in Paul's formation of Christianity.

JESUS IN ISLAM

In our quest for truth, we have seen that our intellects demand a more consistent and unified approach to the 'word of God'. If the sources that we have cannot be relied upon then we must search out different sources of information that we can rely upon because of its consistency. Any source claiming to be the 'word of God' by definition must be the most consistent and reliable source known to man. Let us now examine the Messenger and Prophet known in Islam as al-Maseeh 'Isa ibn Maryam. We have already included the verse from the Qur'an which described the meeting between Mary and the Angel. Before we continue, let us briefly establish the Qur'an as an authority for us to refer to. The Qur'an is without question the most unique and authentic book known to man. It is still in existence in written and recited form the same way it was during the time of the Prophet. It was memorized by the companions and the Prophet himself (Peace be upon him). Do we have any reports of the disciples of Jesus in the Bible memorizing and cross-checking Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Of course not. These books were written well after the events depicted in them. None of these gospels or Paul's writings ever got Jesus' seal of approval. What about the Qur'an. It is recorded in history that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his companions meticulously preserved the Qur'an. It was recited in its entirety every Ramadhan. Today, there are millions of Muslims who have memorized the Qur'an and over a billion Muslims recite great portions of it everyday. There are no 'revised versions' or 'American Versions'. It is preserved in the language of its revelation, Arabic. Today, Muslims can recite from the Qur'an and be confident that they are reciting the very words that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) recited in his Quraishi Arabic dialect. How many Christians have even seen Aramaic (the language of Jesus) not to mention repeated his very words as he said them? None. Christians can't even decide which English bibles are correct so how can they even fathom reading the very Aramaic that Jesus spoke. Needless to say this aspiration is mute because we know that even the gospels were first written in Greek, a language far from

Jesus' tongue. It is a language that was born from a culture of paganism and multiple deities. The language of the Hebrews of Jesus' time was rooted in their faith in monotheism. Just as the Arabic language today, because of the total comprehensiveness of Islam, is rooted in Tawheed (Oneness of God). Time and space do not permit us to delve into the incredible nature of the Qur'an and how it confidently explains historical events, scientific facts unknown during the time of its revelation, and its unique eloquence so my suggestion is for the reader to investigate the Qur'an further.

Jesus was simply sent to confirm the message of those Prophets who came before him. He called the people to the pure worship of God, alone, without any associates or rivals.

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ ﴿٤٨﴾

And He (Allah) will teach him ['Isa (Jesus)] the Book and *Al-Hikmah* (i.e. the *Sunnah*, the faultless speech of the Prophets, wisdom, etc.), (and) the Tauraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel). (Noble Qur'an 3:48)

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبُّكُمْ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَـٰذَا صِرَٰطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

Jesus proclaims the worship of the One God…

Truly! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him (Alone). This is the Straight Path. (Noble Qur'an 3:51)

Allah describes the likeness of Jesus…

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَ ۖ خَلَقَهُۥ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُۥ كُن
فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾

Verily, the likeness of 'Isa (Jesus) before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: "Be!" - and he was. (Noble Qur'an 3:59)

Allah establishes the authority of the Qur'an concerning Jesus…

إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ ٱلْقَصَصُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۚ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ
ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾

Verily! This is the true narrative [about the story of 'Isa (Jesus)], and, *Laa ilaaha ill-Allah* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the One and the Only True God, Who has neither a wife nor a son). And indeed, Allah is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. (3:62)

The Qur'an in regards to the concept of Trinity…

يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغْلُوا۟ فِى دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا۟ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا
ٱلْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا ٱلْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُۥٓ أَلْقَىٰهَآ إِلَىٰ
مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ ۖ فَـَٔامِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا۟ ثَلَٰثَةٌ ۚ ٱنتَهُوا۟
خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا ٱللَّهُ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَٰنَهُۥٓ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌ ۘ لَّهُۥ
مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧١﴾

O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allah aught but the truth. The Messiah 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah and His Word, ("Be!" - and he was) which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary) and a spirit (*Rooh*) created by Him; so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not: "Three (trinity)!" Cease! (it is) better for you. For Allah is (the only) One *Ilaah* (God), Glory be to Him (Far Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is All-Sufficient as a Disposer of affairs (4:171)

Allah's statement concerning the crucifixion…

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا ٱلْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا
صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ لَفِى شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا لَهُم بِهِۦ
مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا ٱتِّبَاعَ ٱلظَّنِّ ۚ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًۢا ﴿١٥٧﴾

And because of their saying (in boast), "We killed Messiah 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allah," - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of 'Isa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not [i.e. 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary) (4:157)

This is the Jesus of Islam. This is the attribute of Prophethood that goes back through all of the prophets in that they were strengthened by God and were sent to the people to warn and to give glad tidings. They were all given the message of monotheism (worshipping God alone) from the beginning and never did any of the Prophets encourage the people to set them (the Prophets) up as rivals or equals with their Creator. All of the basic beliefs of Christianity as formulated in the 4th and 5th century after Jesus are absolutely incompatible with Islam because as we have shown, the Qur'an debunks the notion of the divinity of Jesus, the trinity, even the crucifixion. Without these core beliefs, Christianity as we know it is empty. So we must ask ourselves, which presentation of Jesus' message is more consistent with what we know of all of the other Prophets' and the words attributed to Jesus in the gospels themselves? Is it the one presented by Paul or the one presented in the Qur'an?

CONCLUSION

This is just a small introduction into what I pray would be a more thorough investigation by the reader in search of the truth. Even though we have discussed some passages from the Bible to extract some points that those who have read the Bible may be familiar with, this is not an endorsement of the Bible. We have established the inconsistent nature of the Bible and how it is seemingly at odds with itself on many key points, many of which we never discussed. My intention was to use what was familiar with the reader as an introduction to the pure monotheism and truth contained in the Qur'an concerning Jesus. If we are sincere in our search for the truth of God, we must respond accordingly upon the discovery of that truth. It is our duty to worship the One, True God who created us all in absolute submission to his will. This is the message of Adam and Noah up to Jesus and Muhammad (Peace be

upon them all). The message is simple and natural. We must acknowledge God as all of the previous Prophets acknowledged him and knew him. That is to acknowledge…

1. **Oneness in his Lordship** – That God is the absolute maker, owner, and Lord of everything and that his dominion extends over all his creation.

2. **Oneness in his Worship** – All acts of worship, sacrifice, and supplication should be directed to God with no intermediaries in between Him and his creatures.

3. **Oneness in His Names and Descriptions** – Nothing in his creation is like him and He is only known as He has described himself through his revelation to the Messengers.

This is the beginning of the correct approach to the true worship of God and he is deserving of nothing less.

Let us conclude with two narrations from God's Last Messenger to Humanity, Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah (Peace be upon him) concerning Jesus and those who claim to be upon the religion of Jesus.

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon said),"By Him (Allah) in whose Hands my soul is, surely 'Isa (Jesus), the Son Of Mary (upon him be Peace) will shortly descend amongst you (Muslims) and will judge mankind justly by the law of the Qur'an. He will break the cross and kill the pig and there will be no Jizya (non-Muslim taxation)" (collected by Bukhari)

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon said)," How will you be when the son of Maryam (Jesus) descends among you, and he will judge people by the law of the Qur'an and not the gospel."(collected by Bukhari)

May The Creator Guide us to truth and remove us from falsehood. Ameen

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